

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 03396 192039Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05 CCO-00
FBOE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02
OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01 SCS-06
OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 /115 W
-----085682 192058Z /64

P R 191901Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0760
INFO COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USINT HAVANA
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINGSTON 3396
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, JM

SUBJECT: CIVIL UNREST IN KINGSTON

VANCOUVER PLEASE PASS TO USIDB DELEGATION

REF: KINGSTON 3323

1. SECOND DAY AFTER DISORDER (REFTEL) KINGSTON REMAINS CALM.
A REVISED REPORT INDICATES THREE LOOTER DEAD INSTEAD OF THE
EARLIER REPORTED FOUR. PM MANLEY AND OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA
YESTERDAY ISSUED CONFLICTING REPORTS OF EVENTS. MINISTER OF
SECURITY HAS BANNED DEMONSTRATIONS FOR AT LEAST THE IMMEDIATE
FUTURE. ALSO HE HAS PUBLICALLY ALLEGED THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS
FROM THE WEST KINGSTON AREA (MOST OF WHOM WERE FROM JLP
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OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA'S CONSTITUENCY) COULD NOT HAVE HAD
PEACEFUL INTENTIONS SINCE ELABORATE SNIPER POSITIONS, ONE WITH
SUB-MACHINE GUN, WERE DISCOVERED ON ROOFTOPS OF TWO BUILDINGS.

2. PM MANLEY'S STATEMENT SEPARATED DEMONSTRATIONS INTO
TWO SEPARATE EVENTS OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY, BOTH IN
WEST KINGSTON WHERE DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDED WORK AND PRO-

TESTED THE STATE OF THE ROADS AND SEWAGE; THE OTHER OCCURRING WHEN GROUPS SPLIT OFF FROM THE FIRST GROUP AND MARCHED TOWARD THE CENTER OF TOWN WHERE THEY ALLEGEDLY BEGAN LOOTING. THE PRIME MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT JAMAICA IS GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME AND ALSO INCLUDED STATEMENT THAT "NEGOTIATIONS OF THE UTMOST SIGNIFICANCE TO THE NATION'S FUTURE ARE BEING CONDUCTED AT THIS VERY MOMENT WITH THE IMF. I URGE PEOPLE TO DISPLAY PATIENCE AND CALM." THE MAYOR OF THE CORPORATE AREA OF KINGSTON-ST. ANDREW, MANLEY SAID, HAD ALREADY STARTED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE STREETS AND SEWERS ON WHICH WORK WAS TO HAVE STARTED THIS WEEK.

3. OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA ISSUED STATEMENT APRIL 18 CLAIMING THAT DEMONSTRATION WAS PEACEFUL "UNTIL IT TURNED SOUR AS A RESULT OF THE HEAVY HAND OF AUTHORITY". THE PRIME MINISTER, SEAGA CLAIMED, FAILED TO MAKE MENTION OF DEMONSTRATIONS IN CENTRAL KINGSTON BY "CRASH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS" (REFTEL) DEMONSTRATING OVER TERMINATION OF THIS PUBLIC WORKS WELFARE ASSISTANCE-TYPE PROGRAM. THROUGHOUT DAY OPPOSITION LEADER AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY DUDLEY THOMPSON HAD APPEALED FOR CALM AND WORKED FOR RESTORATION OF ORDER IN TROUBLED AREAS.

4. AREAS AFFECTED BY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE SUBJECT TO CURFEW ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 17-18. LEFTWING TEACHERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNION CALLED OFF PLANNED PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION FOR WAGE INCREASES YESTERDAY TO PREVENT DEMONSTRATORS BEING MANIPULATED BY EXTRANEIOUS SOURCES.

5. COMMENT: WHEN AMBASSADOR MET WITH MANLEY AT NOON YESTERDAY HE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDULY CONCERNED BY DEMONSTRATIONS AND SEEMED SATISFIED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ABLE TO RESTORE ORDER. HE EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE DID NOT DEEM DEMONSTRATIONS SERIOUS AS THEY HAD LASTED ONLY SHORT TIME AND ACKNOWLEDGED GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SLOW IN RESPONDING TO THE GRIEVANCES ON SEWAGE AND ROAD REPAIR, BUT WHICH HE SAID WAS BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS.

6. ALTHOUGH DEMONSTRATIONS QUICKLY PETERED OUT WHEN MILITARY AND POLICE MOVED IN AND SHOPS AND OFFICES CLOSED, THEY DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY UNDERLYING DESPERATION OF KINGSTON'S POOR AND THE UNEMPLOYED. THE WAY VARIOUS CAUSES LINKED BY DIFFERING DEMONSTRATORS - THOSE UNHAPPY WITH INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES, PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES WHO WERE LEAVING THEIR JOBS, AND LOOTERS - ALSO SHOWS HOW THIS GOVERNMENT CAN EASILY BE FACED WITH SERIOUS CONFRONTATION FROM A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION.

THIS PARTICULAR CONCERN WAS APPARENT WITHIN THE POLICE BY
THE ACTIONS THEY TOOK TO CLEAR A WIDER AREA THAN WAS
ACTUALLY THREATENED.
IRVING

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